

# New economic powerhouse

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**THE Murraylands has cast off its economic troubles of a decade ago to become a thriving regional centre.**

Much of its growth is based on its emergence as an industrial overflow for Adelaide with lower costs of doing business and handy location near prime transport links to the east coast.

The Murraylands has one of the fastest growing economies in the state based mainly on massive employment and investment in the Murray Bridge and Tailem Bend area.

Its growth is headed by meat processor T&R Pastoral, one of the success stories of regional Australia in the past five years.

Apart from T&R Pastoral, the Murraylands is home to two large milk factories, Big River Pork – the nation's third-largest pork factory – and a range of large horticultural companies. Much of the growth is based on Murray Bridge's emergence as a key food-processing centre of the state.

"It is one of the fastest growing parts of the state with 3000 direct jobs expected to be created by the end of 2008 on the back of \$1 billion in business investment," Murraylands Regional Development Board chief executive Brenton Lewis said. The region's success is a sharp contrast to 1990 when unemployment was high, investment low and the outlook grim. Mr Lewis foresees tremendous opportunities for increased industrial development in the Tailem Bend to Murray Bridge corridor.

"Tailem Bend will become a transport and logistics hub, attracting business because of the transport links and low cost of business," he said.

"We also see a major feedlotting industry developing in the Murraylands, providing supply for the T&R meatworks."

The exciting prospects for the region include the development of Murray Bridge as a major horse-racing centre for the state.

Mr Lewis said the proposed Equine Precinct Development will mean an extra 1500 jobs with a new suburb with housing and retail outlets.

Plans are also under way for a \$100 million upmarket accommodation and themed development at the Monarto Zoo. "We believe there should be an airport at Monarto, relocating the Parafield Airport," he said.

Growth includes an extra 450 jobs at the expanded Mobilong Prison to be developed between now and the end of 2010.

Adelaide Mushrooms is expected to have at least 250 employees in the region in the next 18 months.

Mining also offers significant potential with Australian Zircon starting construction of its mineral sands operation this year.

The area has also applied to the Federal Government to set up a technical college in the region.